

Safety In The Science Laboratory - A Student Contract

Accidents happen every day in many activities. Statistically, most accidents happen in the home or while driving a car. Few accidents have occurred in the science classroom. However, in order to decrease the chances of any accidents occurring, all students and visitors to the science laboratories are required to follow the safety procedures listed below:

[Note: This contract is too lengthy and is provided to serve as a guide or starting point for discussion in your school. Make it your own.]

All science teachers in a school should agree on the rules for laboratories. There is strength in numbers; every science teacher must agree that safety is important and abide by the rules set forth by

the department. After the department agrees on a list of rules, the administration must be informed as to the purpose of the list and the necessity of solidarity within the school. Without administrative support, there will be no back-up for you if an accident occurs.]

Some parents will refuse to sign such an agreement. Be prepared to provide "alternative" assignments to those students whose parents refuse to sign. Do not advertise this as an option.

Science courses required for graduation may have some students who prefer not to do labs. **NC GS 115-47 states that science courses will be hands-on, inquiry focused courses.**

SAMPLE: A Student Contract

1. All accidents should be reported to the teacher immediately, no matter how minor.
2. Only those laboratory activities where instructions and permission have been given by the teachers should be performed.
3. Only materials and equipment authorized by the teacher should be used.
4. Written and verbal instructions should be followed carefully. All instructions given by the teacher should be closely followed.
5. Chemical goggles should be used when working in the laboratory and using chemicals. Safety goggles may be used in other science laboratories when chemicals are not being used.

6. Students should prepare for each laboratory activity by reading all instructions. Follow all directions carefully and intelligently. Make note of any deviations announced by your instructor.
7. No food, beverage, or smoking is permitted in any science laboratory.
8. Never taste, smell, or touch chemicals unless specifically instructed to do so.
9. Take great care in noting odors or fumes. Use a wafting motion of the hand. Never put a bottle to your nose and breath deeply.
10. Hands should be washed thoroughly (15 sec) with soap at the conclusion of each laboratory period.
11. Students should know the location of the emergency, first aid and fire fighting-equipment.
12. Students should know the proper fire drill procedure and know where to get help fast.
13. Long sleeves should be rolled up above the wrist. Ties, coats and sweaters should be removed. Long hair should be tied back during laboratory activity.
14. Student apparel should be appropriate for laboratory work. Long hanging necklaces, bulky jewelry and excessive and bulky clothing should not be worn in the laboratory. Closed-toed shoes are a must.
15. Work areas should be kept clean and tidy.
16. Students should always clean and wipe dry all desks, tables or laboratory work areas, at the conclusion of each laboratory activity as part of good housekeeping practices.
17. Broken glass should be removed from work areas and the floor as soon as possible. Never handle broken glass with your bare hands. Broken glass should be placed (using proper techniques) in the labeled, sharps box.
18. All solid waste should be placed in separate waste containers, jars or other designated receptacles. Do not discard any solids in the laboratory sinks.

19. Do not bring any substance into contact with a flame unless specifically instructed to do so.
20. Only laboratory manuals and laboratory notebooks are permitted in the working area. Other books, purses, book bags, and such items should be placed in your desk, locker, or storage area.
21. Students are not permitted in laboratory storage or supply rooms or teacher workrooms unless directly instructed to do so.
22. Upon first entering the laboratory, students are not permitted to touch laboratory equipment until directed to do so.
23. Always twist, never push glass tubing into stopper holes. Lubricate stopper holes and glass tubing with glycerin to insert easily. Always use glass tubing with fire polished ends.
24. Never pour water into acid. Correctly dilute acid by pouring it into water.
25. Direct viewing of the sun, infrared, ultraviolet light or laser sources should be avoided at all times.
26. Never allow the open end of a heated test tube to be pointed toward anyone.
27. Horseplay, running, pushing, shoving and practical jokes will not be tolerated.
28. Only authorized laboratory activities should be attempted at home.
29. Students should never touch or handle laboratory animals without permission from the teacher.
30. Students should conduct themselves in a responsible manner at all times in a laboratory situation.

If your student safety contract could be printed on NCR paper, the student could take a copy home for signatures and have a copy to keep.

Agreement

I, _____ , have had the safety
(Student's name)
rules for the science laboratory explained to me and agree to follow these safety regulations while in science class. I further agree to follow all other written and verbal instructions given in class by the teacher.

(Student's Signature) (Date)

I, as parent and/or guardian of the above named student, have read and discussed the rules with the student. I support safe laboratory practices and will insist on complete compliance with the rules.

(Parent's/Guardian's Signature *) (Date)

Adapted from the National Science Teachers Association, Wake County Public Schools, and sample copies in resource materials.

* Many students live with a guardian rather than a parent or parents. Recognizing that fact is a good public relations for the teacher, school and school system.